

TAKING ACTION FOR WILDLIFE



Impact Report 2021

Love **Essex** • Love **Wildlife**



Essex
Wildlife Trust

'WE BELIEVE THAT COMMUNITY-LED, GRASSROOTS ACTIONS ARE KEY TO MAKING FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES THAT WILDLIFE URGENTLY NEEDS. WE WANT YOU TO CREATE WILDER TOWNS AND WILDER VILLAGES THROUGHOUT ESSEX.'

Keeley Hazelhurst
Chair, Essex Wildlife Trust



Essex Wildlife Trust
Abbotts Hall
Great Wigborough
Colchester
Essex CO5 7RZ

E enquiries@essexwt.org.uk
www.essexwt.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 210065
Company Registered No. 638666
VAT Registered No. 945 7459 77



Essex
Wildlife Trust

Published August 2022

Front cover photo: Evie and Tom Photography
Gardening photo: Penny Dixie

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Your support means the world...



Keeley Hazelhurst

Chair
Essex Wildlife Trust

The people of Essex are amazing.

Last year I asked for your help. I asked you to take a stand and be the difference in your community. And you really delivered!

I have been bowled over by your response in helping us make a change in Essex. Not only are you great supporters of Essex Wildlife Trust, but time and time again you have shown innovation, ambition, and generosity. Your love of nature and wildlife is clear for the whole world to see.

In 2021 alone, you have developed community action projects, you have volunteered over 100,000 hours of your time, you have supported us by being a member, and you have visited Nature Discovery Centres. In recent weeks, you have submitted more than 11,000 records as part of the Essex BioBlitz to help scientists understand the impact of climate change on wildflowers locally, hundreds of you are counting bug splats to increase knowledge of national insect decline, and you've shared our social media posts hundreds of thousands of times, sometimes reaching international audiences.

So thank you. To all our supporters, members, corporate members, funders, legators and volunteers – thank you so very much.

I could leave it there; I could say that this is enough. But unfortunately, our work is not done. We need you even more than ever.

It has become clear that the only way to improve outcomes for wildlife in Essex (and the world) is to work together. We believe that community-led, grassroots actions are key to making fundamental changes that wildlife urgently needs. We want you to create wilder towns and wilder villages throughout Essex. Get involved with your local councils; join in to create more, many more, local wildlife and nature projects; take action to allow nature to thrive in your streets, schools, workplaces, homes, and gardens. And most importantly, speak up for nature.

You will see in this report just how much we have achieved together and how much impact your support makes. Credit for all this amazing work goes to you, because without you, none of this could happen.

Thank you. You truly are amazing.

Keeley Hazelhurst

Taking action for wildlife



Andrew Impey

Chief Executive Officer
Essex Wildlife Trust

Although 2021 started in the same vein as 2020, following the news of a third lockdown, the Trust quickly returned to pre-pandemic levels of activity, ending the year with the successful delivery of some really big and innovative projects for the county of Essex.

We opened our new Nature Discovery Centre at Langdon in July; we inspired the county to plant wildflowers in our first Big Wild Seed Sow in August; we launched our new trail at Chafford Gorges in September, courtesy of Land of the Fanns; and we welcomed families through the gates of our pioneering new Nature Nursery in October. With November came the news that the Wildlife Trust movement would be adopting the Essex Wildlife Trust brand nationally in 2022. As stated in our Covid-19 Response Strategy, it was always our intention to 'come out stronger' after the pandemic, and this certainly proved to be the case in 2021.

During the course of the year, we embedded our two new Higher-Level Objectives into our work: '30% of land and sea in Essex connected and protected for wildlife by 2030' and '1 in 4 people in Essex taking action for wildlife by 2030'. These have galvanised the Trust and brought greater clarity and ambition to our work.

However, in our last report we acknowledged that there was still much to do to elevate our thinking and delivery to the level that will meet the challenges we face in the future. With this in mind, we embarked on a Leadership Review, initially of the Strategic Leadership Team, which involved changes to some personnel. We introduced Directors in key areas, akin to several Wildlife Trusts and other organisations of a similar size. The Leadership Review was completed by the end of the year, with new Directors either in post or ready to start early in 2022.

There were many other things to celebrate. We welcomed new relationships with trusts and foundations such as the Ida Davis Foundation, who generously funded the amazing 'Bee Banks' at Two Tree Island. We presented our early vision for Abbots Hall at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), where we also gave members an opportunity to say which of our 'key species' they would like us to focus on in 2022. Members also pledged to take individual action for wildlife at the AGM, which was a celebration of past and present achievements. There were successes in all of our Strategic Goals and Strategic Themes, which you can read about in this Impact Report. We also continued to take great strides in our journey towards being a high-impact organisation.

I hope you enjoy looking back across 2021 and feel the same sense of pride and hope that I feel. These are your achievements because we could not do this without you and your generous support. Whether you give your time, your money, or your energy, thank you so much for being the driving force behind our success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Andrew Impey'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.



Protecting wildlife

As the challenges associated with Covid-19 abated, 2021 was a year of making up ground in conservation. We redoubled our efforts to achieve our core mission of **protecting wildlife**.

From the first **nesting spoonbills** in 400 years to engaging with an **unprecedented number of planning applications**, the achievements we've highlighted in the following pages were above and beyond our 'business-as-usual' management of **over a hundred sites** across the county for the benefit of **people and wildlife**, covering **over 3,000 hectares of land** and **200 km of watercourses**, drawing on an army of **amazing volunteers**

Members of the Ecology Team, surveying species

Our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do

When it comes to thanking our volunteers for all the work they do, we just can't say it enough. In the past year, volunteers **have donated in excess of 100,000 hours to the Trust**, allowing us to have a positive impact on wildlife in all corners of the county. A massive thank you to each and every one of our volunteers. We couldn't do it without you.

2021 was **a record year** for new volunteers, with a **52% increase in enquiries** by people actively seeking volunteer opportunities at the Trust (compared with 2019). We had **2,321 people registered** as volunteers, donating their time, skills, and knowledge to help with all areas of our work, including conducting surveys, as wardens of their local reserve, and engaging visitors at our Nature Discovery Centres. When asked, **85% of volunteers reported feeling satisfied or very satisfied** with their volunteering at the Trust, despite the disruption of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

Ray Marsh Award 2021

The Ray Marsh Award 2021 was awarded to the fabulous **Jill Jordan**, from Hanningfield Reservoir Nature Discovery Park. Jill is a committed volunteer and dedicates **2-3 days per week** to the Trust, alongside volunteering and fundraising for other charities.

Jill is a passionate ambassador for the Trust and has helped raise thousands of pounds in donations over the years. Since 2020, it is estimated that she personally welcomed over **20,000 visitors to Hanningfield** and is highly regarded as **a brilliant role model and mentor** to other volunteers.

Thank you, Jill, for your contribution to the Trust and for your commitment to the Hanningfield team.



Leading wildlife gain across the county

Blackwater Estuary saltmarsh

It's been an important year for partnership. We worked with partners to lay the groundwork for the **Essex Local Nature Partnership (LNP)** to launch in 2022. Convened by **Essex County Council (ECC)**, the LNP will bring together the county's main stakeholders to join forces and pool resources in order to tackle the climate crisis and the ecological crisis, with Essex Wildlife Trust as the lead conservation organisation. This is something Essex has wanted and needed for a while. It is great news for the county.

Working in partnership is part of our DNA and will be fundamental to our future conservation successes. During the year we collaborated with ECC and Natural England on **Natural Capital Mapping for ECC's 'Climate Focus Area'**, which includes 30% of the county.

In addition, with partners, we are drafting a **Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Essex**, including our own strategic **30 by 30 Nature Recovery Map**, and are key partners in the **Southend Catchment to Coast Project**, which aims to use **Nature-Based Solutions (NBS)** for coastal and flood management. This is just a snapshot of a very broad portfolio of partnership work.

Realising our ambition of Wilder Seas and Wilder Rivers in Essex also moved a few steps closer this year, as our freshwater and saltwater projects continued to increase and grow. The **Essex Fish Migration Roadmap**, an enormous project, was successfully funded, developed,

and is now being actioned. It identifies 400+ blockages in our Essex rivers that render our waterways a string of 'linear lakes' rather than free-flowing, dynamic habitats.

Meanwhile, a bit further from land, we began key NBS projects around the **Blackwater Estuary** (continuing our pioneering work on 'saltmarsh sausages'), were successful in our bid to fund a new project focused on **restoring seagrass meadows**, and we embarked on the BuDS project (which stands for **Beneficial use of Dredged Sediment**) to identify locations, supported by **Natural England's Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF)**. After unavoidable delays in 2020, we have also made important progress on the **critical flood management project in Roxwell**.

It is our duty to get the best deal for wildlife in Essex. In the spirit of this, and in line with our ambition to be at the forefront of planning and development, we examined 895 planning applications, formally responded to 141, and engaged with a number of high-profile local developments and **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects**. These included **Middlewick Ranges**, two offshore windfarms, the **Lower Thames Crossing**, the **A12 Widening Scheme**, and **Bradwell B**.

Without your support, the critical role that we play in the planning system would not be possible. Thank you.



Sheep grazing at Tollesbury Wick nature reserve

Maximising the conservation value of our land

We rolled out our **Ecological Monitoring Programme** for key species and habitats across our reserves, drawing on the expertise and enthusiasm of volunteers and staff. A **State of Nature Report** which draws out the highlights of our new monitoring programme will form part of our yearly communication to members at the AGM.

It was a good year for restoration. Our **wetland restoration project at Fobbing Marsh** is progressing well after numerous planning and funding challenges and will be completed by autumn 2022. Alongside this, we secured planning permission and funding for the **restoration of 40 hectares of wet grassland at Blue House Farm**, funded by a **Biffa Award Partnership Grant** and supported by **Essex and Suffolk Water's Branch Out Priority Habitats Scheme**. As part of a bid led by the **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)**, we also secured £250,000 for infrastructure enhancements at Tollesbury Wick, Howlands Marsh, Fobbing Marsh and Lower Raypits. This is part of the flagship **Greener Thames project**, a £2m programme to enhance wet grassland habitat in Essex and Kent for breeding waders funded by the **National Lottery Heritage Fund's Green Recovery Challenge Fund**.

Following a comprehensive evaluation of our nature reserves in 2020, we have now started exploring and introducing efficiencies in our land management practices, while continuing to meet our obligations to the **Basic Payment Scheme** and **Higher-Level Stewardship Scheme**, which is an important source of income as well as beneficial for wildlife.

In the spirit of continually improving our land management practices, we developed and began to deliver a new **Conservation Grazing Strategy**, which included integrating 'at risk' native breed species and reviewing our livestock numbers and habitat targets. We are also in the process of developing new **Urban, Woodland and Marine Strategies**, which will contribute to the Trust's future targeted work towards nature's recovery in these environments. Meanwhile, all of our nature reserves were managed in accordance with site management plans and relevant agri-environment schemes.

Other notable projects included **extensive works at Oliver Road Lagoons**, thanks to Land of the Fanns funding, and the installation of the innovative **Monty's Lookout at Two Tree Island**, which signals the start of integrating habitat into the design of all Essex Wildlife Trust hides in the future. We were also able to undertake habitat and infrastructure improvements at Great Holland Pits and Wrabness nature reserves for the benefit of biodiversity and visitors alike, thanks to the **Tendring Loves Conservation project**, funded by the **National Lottery Heritage Fund** and complemented by legacies and donations.



Spoonbills: David Tipling/2020 vision

Championing key species

Our work to support key species became more extensive and coordinated in 2021. We developed a **Species Evaluation Tool** for identifying key species in Essex against a range of conservation and engagement criteria. This enabled us to prioritise and focus our actions to get the biggest conservation gain.

On the back of this, it was clear **pollinators** were a priority and we launched our multi-year **Action for Insects in Essex campaign** which combines direct, hands-on conservation alongside indirect conservation through county-wide campaigning. Actions to help our insects ranged from habitat works to create sand banks at Two Tree Island, thanks to the **Ida Davis Foundation**, restoring important micro-habitats at Oliver Road Lagoons, and sensitively managing our nationally important grassland habitats at Langdon and Chafford Gorges Nature Discovery Parks.

We have done a significant amount of public engagement through the **Big Wild Seed Sow**, while the **Bugs Matter** campaign encouraged people to become 'splatometrists' through a citizen science app, using the 'windshield phenomenon' to count the bugs after a car journey. **385 people** signed-up and helped to monitor the abundance of insects across Essex.

The **Share our Shores project** monitored and enhanced habitat for beach-nesting birds, focusing on **little tern**, **ringed plover**, and **oystercatcher**, and raised public awareness to reduce threats of disturbance. **3,199 people engaged** with the campaign. Other marine work focused on restoring populations of **native oysters** as part of the **ENORI project** and connecting young people with the shore, as well as monitoring **European bass and European eel** at the Abbots Hall managed realignment site.

Barriers to fish migration, such as weirs, locks, and flood control structures, between freshwater and marine habitats have been identified through the aforementioned **Essex Fish Migration Roadmap**. In 2021, the Rivers' Team **ground-truthed 20 barriers to fish** migration at sites across the Blackwater and Colne catchments and completed initial options appraisals for three sites.

Toad Watch aims to record where our toads, toad crossings and toadlets are in Essex to give a picture of toad networks across the county. There were **55 survey submissions** in 2021 that will help to inform their conservation across the landscape. Great crested newts are monitored on several of our nature reserves, including Abberton Reservoir and Chafford Gorges, and works on three ponds at Langdon were completed in 2021 to enhance habitat conditions for this protected species.

We championed key species across the media in 2021, a highlight being **a pair spoonbills** successfully nesting and raising their young at Abberton Reservoir for the first time for 400 years! Also at Abberton, we had numerous visits from **white storks**, another bird that once would have graced the Essex landscape.

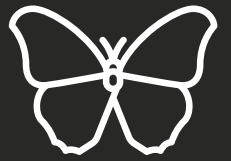
Other key species works included a partnership project with **Kew Gardens** on propagating and planting **man orchids** at Chafford Gorges; supplementary feeding of **turtle doves** at three sites in the Abberton area in partnership with Essex and Suffolk Water and the RSPB; and working with specialists to assess the condition and recommend conservation works for our precious **veteran trees** at Warley Place.

2021 **in a nutshell**



3,030
hectares

managed
for **wildlife**



200KM OF WATERCOURSES
MANAGED FOR WILDLIFE



895

PLANNING APPLICATIONS
EXAMINED

141 FORMAL RESPONSES SUBMITTED



different **schools**
visited our sites

HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF OUR
THESE ARE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS



668

PEOPLE
ATTENDED

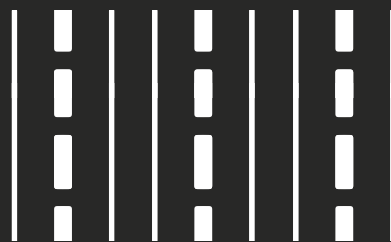


TRAINING SESSIONS

4,300

campaigners took
multiple actions for wildlife

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5 NSIPS ENGAGED WITH
(Nationally Significant
Infrastructure Projects)



2,321

VOLUNTEERS
HELPING TO
PROTECT WILDLIFE



1,000,000 VISITORS TO CENTRES

UP FROM 480,000 VISITORS IN 2020

OUR HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2021



AS MUCH AS OURS



40.1K

38.6K IN 2020

MEMBERS



130K

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

AND SUPPORTERS

218 school visits

at 34 different schools

VOLUNTEERING HOURS



100K



370

local businesses
are Investors in Wildlife



300K

VISITORS
TO OUR NATURE
RESERVES



6,352

PEOPLE ATTENDED
OUR EVENTS



Essex
Wildlife Trust

A young girl with voluminous curly hair is running through a grassy field, smiling broadly. She is wearing a white sleeveless top and denim shorts. The background is a soft-focus green field with trees in the distance.

Inspiring a lifelong love of nature

Our mission is to protect wildlife and inspire a lifelong love of nature. These two aims are very closely linked: by encouraging people to take action for wildlife, we can maximise the potential of engagement as an effective form of indirect conservation. In short, we inspire to protect.

From the opening of the new **Langdon Nature Discovery Centre** to the launch of our first **Nature Nursery** at Abbots Hall, it really has been a year of big-hitting projects. In addition, we undertook an enormous array of work, from completing our first cycle of the new quarterly **Wild Magazine**, to finishing Season 1 of our popular podcast, **The Wildlife Explorer**, to reaching out to new partners and key decision-makers to **lobby on behalf of nature**.



Langdon Nature Discovery Centre opening

Creating places of wonder

Drawing on our hard-won experience from 2020, we responded with agility to further Covid-19 lockdowns and rapidly changing Government guidelines by developing a range of **flexible operating models** at our Nature Discovery Centres (NDCs). By adapting so quickly to circumstances throughout 2021, we were able to offer great wildlife experiences to a **million visitors at our NDCs** and a further **300,000 visitors at our nature reserves**.

Not only did we maintain operations: we introduced several significant improvements to the experience of our members and visitors. We developed and implemented a new **Food and Beverage Strategy**, at the heart of which is our ambition to be **a model of ethical and responsible catering**, delighting our customers while maximising profit for the protection of wildlife.

We introduced a new **Retail Strategy**, trialling a model retail store at our new Langdon NDC. We also introduced a **Visitor Experience Survey**, feedback from which has reflected positively on our visitor experience, as well as giving us valuable insights into how we can continue to improve. Furthermore, our centres and reserves continued to get a face-lift through our county-wide **Signage and Interpretation Project**.

Despite the constant spectre of Covid-19 and the subsequent financial fallout, we achieved **record levels of centre-based donations and memberships**. This is testament to the people of Essex's commitment to protecting wildlife and the environment, even in the face of increased economic pressures. A huge thank you.

After two years of blood, sweat and tears (not to mention a series of frustrating but unavoidable Covid-related delays) our new **Nature Discovery Centre at Langdon** opened its doors in July 2021. Sympathetic to the Plotlands history while being contemporary and iconic, the new centre has delighted supporters and members of the public since the summer and has finally given Langdon the visitor centre it deserves.

As well as having an energy-efficient, sustainable new centre, Langdon also happens to have **a new car park that integrates habitat into its design**, making it the most wildlife-friendly car park in the UK (to our knowledge). Our thanks to **Veolia Pitsea Marshes Maintenance Trust** and the **National Lottery Community Fund**.



Delivering outstanding outdoor learning

Nature Nursery grounds at Abbots Hall Farm

We resumed full delivery of our flagship education programmes, including **Nature Tots**, **Forest School**, and **Accredited Forest School Training**. In addition, we added a new portfolio of online courses to our provision, the **Wild Living Programme**, in order to make nature-related education as accessible as possible to anyone, anywhere. In total, **6,352 people** attended our events, and **668 people** attended training sessions. The Wilder Learning Team attended **218 school visits**, visited **34 different schools**, and welcomed **51 different schools** to our own sites.

We started several significant education projects too. **Tendring Loves Conservation (TLC)** is a two-year project that focuses on community engagement and local site improvements in areas of multiple deprivation in North Essex, generously funded by the **National Lottery Heritage Fund**, while **Eco Schools**, funded by the **Oceans Together Forum**, helped us to increase our presence in local schools in South Essex.

However, the jewel in the crown of our work with schools in 2021 was our **Nature Friendly Schools (NFS)** project, funded by **Defra** and **Natural England**. As the name suggests, NFS is a school-based engagement project to support schools to become more 'nature friendly', focusing in particular on engaging low-income families in densely populated urban areas; eligible

schools had 30% or more pupils claiming for Free School Meals.

We worked closely with **20 schools over two years**, covering Tendring, Colchester, Barking and Dagenham, Southend-on-Sea, Basildon, and Havering. Each school followed a tailored programme that included outdoor learning sessions, teacher training, and **Greening the School Grounds**. In practice, this involved things like tree planting, creating wildflower meadows, wooden planters, willow dome classrooms, and lots of bespoke work. We also provided tools and clothing, such as wellies and waterproofs, as 90% of teachers surveyed cited clothing and equipment as a fundamental enabler (or barrier) to outdoor learning.

Last but not least, we launched our pioneering **Nature Nursery** at Abbots Hall in October 2021. This is our first Ofsted-registered, entirely outdoor nursery. It offers inspiring and affordable childcare and education for 2-5 year-olds based on 'learning through nature'. It aims to introduce **sustained nature connection into the lives of preschool children**, and our intention is to provide a replicable model for the sector that challenges mainstream approaches to childcare, where the majority of time is spent indoors. The Nature Nursery builds on our position **at the forefront of outdoor learning**. The feedback from families has already been fantastic.

Growing wildlife supporters

It was a year of bouncing back to healthy levels of membership. We recovered from our dip to 38,600 members in 2020 to reach **40,100 members**. As well as attracting new members, we continued to grow our online supporters too, reaching **130,000 supporters** across all social channels, while recipients of our **email communications increased by 13%**. We also had a significant increase in **digital-only Green Members**.

At the start of the year, our first digital appeal raised **£14,700** to support the Trust's work to create a Wilder Essex. We set up a new campaigner's email list which allows us to regularly reach supporters who are interested in standing up for nature at the click of a button. Amongst many campaigns, these supporters have helped us to demand **the end of selling peat-based products** and to **speak up for badgers** after the announcement of further culling.

We continued to push for the Trust's projects to be shared regularly amongst local, national, and international news outlets. The song of the nightingale at Fingringhoe Wick echoed out across **BBC Radio 4**, while the Essex coastline was championed on **Good Morning Britain**. We spoke up against ecologically damaging development plans on **Channel 4**, the orange seals featured on **Dave**, and the story of how our saltmarsh restoration projects are working to fight climate change was detailed by **Mongabay**. By sharing these projects far and wide we're helping to tell the story of Essex's wildlife, and how people can protect it.

In June, over **4,000 participants** took part in 30 Days Wild, our annual campaign to connect people with nature each day in June. This included a record number of care homes signing up, recognising the positive benefit that daily interactions with nature has on residents.

To reach new supporters and give individuals the tools to create positive change themselves, we launched the **Big Wild Seed Sow** in August. Over 2,000 native wildflower seed packets were handed out, for free, to visitors at our Nature Discovery Centres. You also helped us raise £1,700 for the project through donations to our Big Wild Seed Sow appeal, helping us to purchase more wildflower seed packets for 2022.

With COP26 held in the autumn, the Trust sent our **Let Nature Help report** on nature-based solutions and our **vision of a Wilder Essex** to all Essex MPs. Alongside this, we included guidance on how each constituency could be made wilder, benefiting the environment and local people.

At the national AGM in November, the Wildlife Trusts voted collectively to adopt the 'new' **badger logo** that was developed internally by Essex Wildlife Trust in 2019. As well as being good kudos for Essex, this is a huge step forward nationally: the lack of a unifying brand has often stopped us from being greater than the sum of our parts as a movement. There will be **significant and tangible gains to having a consistent brand across the movement**. The more coherent and higher profile the national brand, the more Essex Wildlife Trust will benefit locally from new members, supporters, access to funding, and income; all the things that drive our impact on wildlife.

Continuing our mission to grow wildlife supporters at every age, we hosted a live YouTube event, **Wilder Essex: LIVE**, aimed at 16-25 year-olds. Chaired by our Chief Executive Andrew Impey, the panel event included young members of staff and volunteers from the Trust, the University of Essex, and nature communicator Sophie Pavelle, with discussions focusing on how young people can influence the future and start a successful career in the environmental sector.

2021 also saw the 30-year anniversary of the Trust's **Investors in Wildlife** scheme. We undertook a thorough review of the scheme in order to refocus our efforts on supporting businesses to be more sustainable and more ambitious. We want to make business in Essex wilder.

We ended the year celebrating a record year for our **Photography Competition**, with close to **1,000 images submitted**, showcasing wild Essex at its best. Sponsored by **High Chelmer Shopping Centre**, the competition encouraged more people to engage with wildlife photography, whether on their own doorstep or on one of our nature reserves.

The good, the bad and the ugly

2021 was a better year than 2020 in almost all respects, as we emerged from Covid-19. For the second year in succession we should be extremely proud of how, as an organisation and as a united team, we dealt with the challenges of another difficult year. However, project delays, largely due to recruitment challenges, resulted in minimal progress in some important pieces of work. We are an extremely reflective organisation, and we are all too aware that we aren't operationally perfect in everything we do. We know that there are efficiency savings still to be achieved and, having formalised our 'Lessons Learned' process, we always aim to learn from any mistakes. We are fiercely ambitious for our county, but we are also aware that we need to hold ourselves to account against those same high standards.

The good

It would be remiss of us to identify the highlights of 2021 without mentioning the launch of the Nature Nursery and the opening of the new centre at Langdon. Both of these projects were complex, multi-year endeavours that involved significant work, and suffered from successive Covid-related delays; not to mention the fact that they were in our 'ugly' list last year. However, both are now open and are providing the people of Essex, young and old, with amazing wildlife experiences.

We were open about the frustrating delays in 2020 in updating the

signage and interpretation of our sites, with the priority being our Nature Discovery Centres (based on natural cycles of repair and maintenance). However, 2021 was completely different. Everything from internal resourcing to the availability of external suppliers was much improved, and we are pleased with the progress. Go see for yourself!

Our work to support Essex's key species ramped up significantly in 2021, with a combination of conservation efforts on our own land, which included a particular focus on pollinators and

invertebrates through our Action for Insects programme, coupled with a busy schedule of citizen science and campaigning – with our new campaigning function flourishing. On the same theme, we began a programme of site improvements throughout the Tendring area, creating and improving habitats for key species, as well as improving access for people. This was part of the fantastic NLHF-funded Tendring Loves Conservation (TLC) project.

The bad

We completed the county-wide evaluation of our reserves in 2020 which identified potential areas where we can improve the way we allocate resources and areas where we could prioritise land acquisition. However, competing priorities meant that progressing this work was limited in 2021. We intend to make up ground in 2022.

Although the Leadership Review was necessary to ensure that the Trust has the right Directors to meet the challenges over the next decade,

any organisational restructure causes a level of disruption. We are now well equipped for 2022 and beyond, but the Review resulted in a temporary reduction in senior staff which was challenging.

Finally, although we completed the development of our new Woodland Strategy, we have yet to fully implement it. There were also challenges in implementing our Conservation Grazing Strategy.

The ugly

Although the worst of the pandemic (to date) hit us in 2020, the knock-on effect of delays to the Nature Nursery and the Langdon Nature Discovery Centre have continued to impact our project portfolio. We committed to undergoing significant improvements to Chafford and Abberton in 2021, and while Abberton has seen several improvements inside and out, Chafford remains closed. This is something we are eager to fix.

Financial summary

Essex Wildlife Trust year ended 31 December 2021

Financial review

2021 was another positive year for the Trust's finances, despite continuing disruptions to its operations during the first half of the year from the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Trust reported an operating surplus of £0.2 million, while its long-term investments again performed strongly, increasing in value by nearly £1.0m. Total funds rose by £1.4m and amounted to over £34 million at the end of the year.

The operating surplus of £0.2m in 2021 was £2.4m lower than the surplus of £2.6m earned in 2020, mainly because legacy income of £1.4m was £2.2m lower than the exceptionally high level of £3.7m reported in 2020. Our trading activities saw an improvement from 2020 with income from food, beverage and retail activities at our Nature Discovery Centres (NDCs) increasing by 60%, although it was still 35% lower than 2019 levels as NDCs were closed in the first part of the year due to the lockdown. Income from grants and donations grew by £0.5m to £1.3m, and included the final grant funding for the new Langdon NDC.

Expenditure on charitable activities rose by over £0.5m and exceeded the level incurred pre-pandemic, despite the restrictions that continued into 2021. Expenditure on raising funds also increased, partly through an increase in trading activities at NDCs, but also because expenditure on raising voluntary income grew.

In the balance sheet, the increase in tangible fixed assets reflects the completion of work at our newly opened NDC at Langdon and the construction of our Nature Nursery that opened in the autumn. The market value of the Trust's long-term investments increased to £14.6m, but cash balances decreased by over £0.5m due to the investments made in fixed assets.

Delivering all aspects of the Trust's strategic plan will cost money. The Trustees have approved medium-term plans which show operating deficits until income has been grown to support this higher level of expenditure. To fund these potential deficits while retaining a prudent level of free reserves, £3.5m has been released to general funds from various designated funds where the funds were either being held for non-specific purposes or exceeded the level required. The Trust's finances are therefore in good shape to support its ongoing commitment to investing in the future of wildlife in Essex.

Bob Holmes

Treasurer
Essex Wildlife Trust

Summary Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities	2021 £000's	2020 £000's
Income		
Donations and Legacies	4,151	5,828
Charitable Activities	2,184	2,213
Other Trading Activities	1,882	1,540
Income from Investments	398	459
Total Income	8,615	10,040
Expenditure		
Charitable Activities	5,137	4,590
Raising Funds	3,234	2,809
Total Expenditure	8,371	7,399
Operating Surplus	244	2,641
Net Gains on Investments	975	691
Defined Benefit Pension Scheme	138	(15)
Net Movement in Funds	1,357	3,317
Funds Brought Forward	33,239	29,922
Funds Carried Forward	34,596	33,239

Summary Consolidated Balance Sheets	2021 £000's	2020 £000's
Tangible and Intangible Fixed Assets	15,607	15,308
Long Term Investments	14,572	13,401
Stocks	262	188
Debtors	1,844	1,583
Short Term Investments & Cash at Bank and in Hand	2,851	3,403
Creditors falling due within one year	(488)	(458)
Creditors falling due after more than one year	(52)	(186)
Total Net Assets	34,596	33,239
Designated Funds	3,655	7,379
General Funds	9,706	5,403
Total Unrestricted Funds	13,361	12,782
Restricted Funds	17,987	17,389
Endowment Funds	3,248	3,068
Total Funds	34,596	33,239

These are the summarised accounts. If you would like to view the full audited accounts in more detail, please go to www.essexwt.org.uk or request a copy from Essex Wildlife Trust, Abbotts Hall Farm, Great Wigborough, Colchester, Essex CO5 7RZ.

The accounts have been audited by Moore Kingston Smith LLP and received an unqualified audit opinion. They were approved by Board on 26 July 2022 and will be submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies.

We couldn't do it without **you**

We are enormously grateful to our **members**, our **Local Groups**, our **legators**, **corporate members**, and **funders**. Wildlife in Essex would be in a much poorer state without you.

LEGATORS

The wonderful foresight and kindness of our legators enables us to increase our impact on wildlife in Essex in the coming years.

Ms Betty Evans	Ms Nancy Hazel Timbrell
Mrs Patricia Firmin	Mrs Ruth Wymer Tucker
Mrs Rose Gordon	Mrs Betty June Vesey
Mrs Cynthia Kemp	Mrs Nancy Watkins
Mr Lynford Graham Henry Neville	Mrs Joan Wightman
Miss Margaret Annie Eugenie Nickson	Mrs Jill Charlotte Wilson
Miss Valerie Morwenna Perriton	Mrs Beryl Woolgar
Mrs Barbara Fraser Pudney	
Ms Judith Mary Robinson	
Mrs Nora Joyce Tibbitts	

All gift in Wills and Deed of Variations, no matter what size, make a significant difference to what we can achieve, and we are truly grateful to every single person. **A huge thank you to our amazing legators in 2021.**

FUNDERS

We are also extremely grateful to our funders in 2021, who have helped us towards our core costs and our projects.

Active Essex
AIM Foundation
Anglian Water Trust
Biffa Award
DEFRA
Environment Agency
Essex & Suffolk Water
Ida Davis Foundation
Land of the Fanns
National Lottery Community Fund
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Natural Environment Research Council
People's Postcode Lottery
The Lockett Trust
Veolia

These lists are not exhaustive. **Essex Wildlife Trust** is very grateful to all its generous funders.

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Our thanks to local (and locally minded) businesses that are part of our Investors in Wildlife scheme, working in partnership with us to make business wilder. You are helping us to build a 'green alliance' that is greater than the sum of its parts.

2plan Wealth Management	Claridon Group Ltd	Firstead Properties Ltd	L Holmes Dental Laboratory	PNP Trees	Station Automotive
A Duke & Son	Cleancare International	Fisco Tools Ltd	Langdon Hills Golf Club	Port Flair Ltd	S-Tech Solar Ltd
A R Adams (Funeral Directors) Ltd	Clifford Brown & Grimsey	Flowline Ltd	Laurie Wood Associates Ltd.	Port Of London Authority	Stillwater Management
Abbott Fasteners Ltd	Insurance Brokers Ltd	Franklin Group	Leagold Miller	Port of Tilbury London Ltd	Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome
Accuro Environmental Ltd	CNG Business Advice T/A Smart Support	G & K Groundworks Ltd	Leisure Hire Marquees Ltd	Premier Print & Promotions Ltd	Summerdale Veterinary Centre
ACL (Adult Community Learning) Essex	Coachstop	Galloper Wind Farm Ltd	Lemon Fencing Ltd	Prestige Conjuring	Swallow Aquatic
Actual Health and Safety	Coda Systems Ltd	Gardenature	Liz Lake Associates Ltd	Primassure Ltd Insuring	Sync Creative
Adam & Greenwood Funeral Home	Colchester Borough Council	Gardens Of Peace Muslim Cemetery Trust	Local Business Domination	Essex Growth	Systematics International Ltd
Adhesive Technical Services	Collier & Catchpole Limited	Gemini Office Solutions Ltd	London Gateway Networks Ltd	Priority Support Services Ltd	T J Evers Ltd
Affinity Water Ltd	Colne Stoves & Fireplaces	George Thompson Ltd	Loughton Town Council	Procam Agriculture Ltd	Talis Projects Ltd
Alchemize Ltd	Commodity Centre (UK) Ltd	GIS Spatial Mapping	LSJ Engineering Ltd	Purple Bear Group	Tarmac
ALM Training Services	Complete Intacare Hygiene	Globalnet IT Innovations Ltd	Lucy & Co	Qinetiq Shoburness	Tendring District Council
Alton Garden Centre	Complete Locksmith Services Ltd	Glorcroft Limited	LWFC&G Ltd	Quadrant Security Services	Thames Card Technology Ltd
Andy Rose Photography	Constable VAT Consultancy LLP	Goodmove Moving	M Lucking & Sons	Land & Marine Ltd	Thames Water Utilities Ltd
Anglian Water Services Ltd	Consult A Penguin Ltd	Gower Brothers Ltd	M P Architects LLP	R & D Advisors UK Ltd	The Big Bear Cider Mill Ltd
Animal Health Co Ltd	Cooper Bros (Great Oakley) Ltd	Grays Office Supplies	Maldon District Council	R Gwinnell & Sons	The Big Green Internet Ltd
Aqua Environmental Services Limited	Corrian IT Consultancy Ltd	Grape Passions Ltd	Maldon Golf Club	Rawley Plant Ltd	The CME Personnel Consultancy
Ash Associates Ltd	Courts Of Rayleigh	Green Light Print Solutions Ltd	Maldon Marine Ltd	Raytel Group Ltd	The DS Group
Associate Enterprises Ltd	Crane Building Management Services Ltd	Green Robins	Maplewood Carpentry Ltd	Red Cell Ltd	The Finishing Line Ltd
Aveley Lodge Care Home	Curtis Assemble & Test Ltd	Greetings	Marks Hall Estate	Relish	The Full Works Ltd
Ayers & Cruiks	D & A Media Ltd	GRIDSERVE Sustainable Energy Ltd	Marmi Ltd	Revive Digital Media	The Landscape Centre Limited
B & M Barnes	D Chennells Ltd	Gripeck Ltd	Martyn Lewis Chartered Accountant	Reynolds Industrial Cleaning Ltd	The Othona Community
B.E.E. Pest Control	D H Industries Ltd	Ground Control Ltd	MDM Timber Ltd	RHS Garden Hyde Hall	The Royals Shopping Centre
Backhouse Solicitors	D J Fisher (Farms) Ltd	Guardian Industrial Doors	Messrs. Tilbrook's Solicitor	Rimplas	The Trop Shop
Baker Labels	D K Moriarty Ltd	H W Wilson Ltd	Millane Contract Services Ltd	Riverside Nursery & Garden Centre	Thinking Outside Ltd
Bakers Of Danbury Ltd	Daniel Bridge Photography	Hairways (Hair & Beauty) Ltd	Mirror Door Systems Ltd	Riverside Veterinary Group	THS Concepts Ltd
Basildon Borough Council	Daniel Robinson & Sons	Harlow Garden Services Limited	Monthind Clean Ltd	RL Solutions Ltd	Tim Grigsby
Basildon Timber	Daws Heath Timber Ltd	Harwich Haven Authority	Montrose Trees Ltd	Rochford District Council	Tim Moya Associates
Battlesbridge Antiques Centre (The Old Granary)	Dengie Crops Ltd	Healthy Life Essex CIC	Morley Riches & Ablewhite	Rochford Hundred Golf Club	Timber Tec
Benchmark Landscape Ltd	DeVines Accountants Ltd	Henderson & Taylor (PW) Ltd	MWS	Rochford Tree Services	Tina Wing Photography
Bennetts (Brentwood) Limited	Diamond Press Ltd	HESC Ltd	Myomancy Ltd T/A Wiltshire Farm Foods	Rose Of Colchester Ltd	Trait Design Ltd
BGA Architects	Downwell Demolition Ltd	High Chelmer Shopping Centre	MyWebHero Limited	Ruark Audio Ltd	Transdec
Birkett Long	E T Brown & Son	Hi-Tec Europe Ltd	Navigator Terminals Thames Ltd	Ruggles & Jeffery Ltd	Transscape
Birketts LLP	Eastwood Tile Warehouse	Home Instead Senior Care	NC Appliance Repairs Ltd	RW & JR Burroughs	Tree Fella Ltd
Bitwise IT Ltd	Edmund Carr	Hoppings Softwood Products Plc	Networking Essex	S G Shields (Benfleet) Ltd	Trenitalia c2c Ltd
Bizphit	Effective Business Network	HSQE Ltd	New Holland Agriculture	S P Bardwell Ltd	Twister Solutions Ltd
Blackburn & Co Ltd	Electrical Solutions	Hugh Pearl Land Drainage Ltd	Nexus HR Consultancy Ltd	S Stibbards & Sons Ltd	TWO Services Ltd
Bland Landscapes Ltd	Ellisons Legal LLP	Hunter And Sons Tree Services	Nicholls Law	S. Carter & Son	UK Power Networks Ltd
Blatella Films Ltd	Elm Horticulture Ltd	Hygiene Contracts Limited	North Benfleet Hall Fishery	Sally Parkinson Photography	Universal Image Systems Ltd
Bowling Garrard Electrical Ltd	Elm House Veterinary Centre	I D Corcoran Building Contractors Ltd	Oak View Landscapes Limited	Santry Davis	Utilize Plc
Braintree District Council	EOL IT Services	Ian Wallinhurst Kar Co Ltd	Office Needs (Essex) Ltd	Sarah Green's Organics	Vanitorials Ltd
Brents of Brentwood Ltd	EPC-Group UK	IDC Greenscapes Ltd	Old Park Meadow Ltd	Scooter Store Ltd	Vaughan & Blyth (Construction) Limited
Brett Aggregates	Essex & Suffolk Insurance Brokers	Impamark Ltd	Olympus Keymed Ltd	Scott Wallis Seeds Ltd	Ventam Systems Ltd
Brewster Motors Essex Ltd	Essex & Suffolk Water PLC	Industrial Metal Services	One to One Personnel Ltd	Sealife Adventure/Miller Leisure Ltd	Veolia Environmental Services (UK) Plc
Bright & Sons Ltd	Essex Chambers Of Commerce	Infotec Consulting	Organisation For Responsible Business (ORB)	Seekay Horticultural Supplies	Waldegraves Farm Ltd
Brightest Fuels Ltd	Essex County Council Environment & Economy	Ingrebourne Valley Ltd	Orwak Easi UK Ltd	Shadowfax Technology	WAVEDATA Ltd
Brown & Carroll (London) Ltd	Essex Digital Copiers	Intu Lakeside Ltd	Osea Leisure Park	Sheridan Accountancy Services Ltd	Wellity
C J Bardwell Ltd	Essex Mechanical Services	Islandbridge Properties Ltd	P & P Maintenance Services	Shipman Security Systems Ltd	Whirledge & Nott
Cadman Construction Ltd	Essex Memorials Limited	J & D Foods	Palmer Solicitors	Sibbons Plant Hire	Whittle & Partners LLP
Calor Gas	Essex Reclamation Ltd	J B Russell Engineers Ltd	Peak Security Systems Ltd	Silver City Estates Ltd	Wickham Engineering
Capel Court Plc	Essex Salt Ltd	J W Steele & Sons Ltd	Peldon Hall Farms	Simmons Printers	Wilkin & Sons Ltd
Carbon Sure Consulting Ltd	Essex Security Services Ltd	Jackie Spurr Consulting Ltd	Perrywood Garden Centre & Nurseries Ltd	Skinandbliss.Com Ltd	Willow Garden Day Nursery
Castle Point Borough Council	Estuary Housing Association Ltd	Javalin Network Services Ltd	Pest Defence Ltd	Solar Green Ltd	Wire Free Protection Ltd
CBD Pure Life	European Refrigeration Ltd	JKS Group Ltd	PGM Carpentry Contractors Ltd	Southfields Veterinary Specialists	Witham Town Council
CEME Limited	Express Environmental Solutions Ltd	Kaizen Consultancy Ltd	PJR Communications Ltd	space282	Woodfashions Ltd
Channels Golf Club Ltd	F H Ives Ltd	Kelly Turkeys	Platt Rushton	Spains Hall Partnership	Woodhouse Engineering
Chelmer Marquees Ltd	F P Guiver & Sons Limited	Ken Rush Associates Ltd	Plumner Electrical Engineering	Squibb Group Ltd	Wormell Plant/hire
Chelmsford City Council	Fen Farm Caravan Site	Kieran Lucas Contractors Ltd	PMR Solutions Ltd	SRBE Ltd t/a Jovic Plant	Wow Balloons
Chorus Advisers Ltd	Fenn Wright	KJL Group	PMV Essex Ltd	SS&C Financial Services	Zeelandia
City & Country				International Ltd	
Clacton On Sea Golf Club				St Ceed's School	
				St Georges Pest Control Ltd	



The next chapter

In 2022 and beyond, we are committed to making the **Essex Local Nature Partnership** as successful as possible. We believe this is one of the key delivery vehicles for much of the big conservation gains in Essex over the next few years.

In line with our aim of 30% of land in Essex being connected and protected for wildlife by 2030 (aka '30 by 30'), we are planning to pursue new **land acquisition plans**, building up a pipeline for the next few years. Only 14% of the land in Essex is currently classed as natural green space, so there is a long way to go.

The second year of our **Ecological Monitoring Programme** will continue to improve the evidence-based management of our land, while we also embark on more extensive **engagement with farmers and landowners**, particularly around the Blackwater Estuary. Looking beyond the land, a new **Wilder Seas Strategy** will give our 350-miles of unique coastline, as well as our marine environment more broadly, the attention it deserves.

In line with our aim of 1 in 4 people in Essex taking action for wildlife by 2030 (aka '1 in 4'), we will be implementing a new **Engagement Strategy** that embeds widening access to nature and inspiring people to take action for wildlife into all our engagement and delivery from 2022 onwards. As part of this new focus on engagement, we will be aligning ourselves with the national **Team Wilder movement** and developing our portfolio of 'community organising' projects that mobilise and facilitate communities and individuals to take action for wildlife on their own terms and on their own local patch.

An **ambitious programme of education activities** will help us to target those with barriers to access, including low-income families, ethnically diverse families, families with special educational needs or disabilities, and 'urban' families with limited physical access to nature. Our aim is for at least 20% of our education delivery to be free and targeted to those who need it, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

Led by our Inclusion Group, we will continue to build **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** into everything we do. We believe that access to nature is a universal right and 'Wildlife for all' is a moral imperative as well as a practical necessity. We will therefore continue in our mission to make nature relevant to everyone, as well as removing physical, emotional, and financial barriers.

Organisations are often limited by the inefficiencies of their systems and processes. In 2022, we are hoping to introduce several significant systems that unlock greater organisational performance, as well as more time and cost savings, as part of our **Digital Transformation Project**, including a new finance system, and a new health and safety compliance system.

The importance of being environmentally sustainable will continue to inspire us to action. Maintaining our **Green Dragon accreditation** is a priority this year. This will keep us on course to being carbon neutral and will help us to fully understand our positive and negative impacts and change our behaviours accordingly.